



DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH
CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND EVANGELIZATION

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Dear School Communities:

As a Catholic faith community, in times of uncertainty our first response is to pray for guidance and grace to meet the challenges of the day. We are called today to meet a challenge with which we have no significant past experience. In creating policies and procedures related to the coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19), we join people from around the world who are working through the same things. While there is much we do not know, we are people of action so our focus will be on what steps we can take, based on what we do know, to protect all that we love. Working together in our communities, schools, and homes, as we always do, will sustain us through any level of challenge.

The health, safety and well-being of our students, staff and families is a top priority at our schools. The situation is filled with ever-changing information, and we are committed to providing regular communications, with prompt updates, regarding important health-related information to our families. We will be taking guidance from the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD), PA Department of Health, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

Below are best practices in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Please read and act with a sense of urgency but not fear.

Preventative Hygiene

- Please stay home when sick. The CDC recommends that individuals remain home for a minimum of 72 hours after fever and other symptoms subside.
- If you have actual or potential exposure to the coronavirus via contact with an infected person, cruise ship travel, or travel to CDC identified high risk area, do not return to school before consulting with school administration.
- Student absences related to coronavirus prevention or recovery will be excused.
- Please follow CDC and PA Department of Health requirements for reporting illness.
- **Washing hands often with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds**, especially after bathroom use, before eating, and after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- If you are exposed to someone with COVID-19, stay at home in self-quarantine for 14 days.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow if you do not have a tissue.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using regular household cleaner or spray wipe.

While these are common sense actions for many, children often need reminded. Please help us by reinforcing these health practices at home. Any specific health concerns should be directed to your family physician.

Travel Guidelines

- If students are traveling out of the country, or to an area of the U.S. that is known to have coronavirus, parents/guardians should notify the school principal. This request will remain in effect until the end of the school year.
- Schools cannot support parental requests for educational trips to areas affected by coronavirus. We discourage families from taking trips to affected areas and may prohibit students from returning to school before the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-suggested quarantine period. The school may request medical clearance to return to school.
- Schools will suspend scheduled field trips and travel experiences to determine the risk as per CDC recommendations.
- Schools will limit large gatherings.

In the Event of School Closures

- Now is the time to prepare for childcare, if there is a quarantine period. This is challenging at every level, but necessary.
- Schools are preparing for alternative learning experiences, please advise your schools of your technology needs to enable their students to participate in online learning.

For additional information concerning coronavirus, please see the CDC, PA Department of Health and the ACHD guidelines at the links below:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

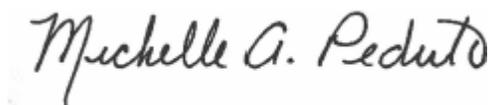
<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

<https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Health-Department/Resources/Data-and-Reporting/Infectious-Disease-Epidemiology/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>

Please know that our actions are to protect our communities from the spread of COVID-19, so as more information surfaces, our recommendations will evolve to best serve our families.

Please contact me if you have any questions. Our prayers go out to all those around the world and here at home confronted by this virus.

God bless you,



Michelle A. Peduto